

The Group of 20 Foreign Ministers Meeting, convened at the initiative of Indonesia under its G20 presidency, focused on two major topics. The first topic is the crisis of multilateralism and the need to take all possible measures to overcome this crisis and return to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter – specifically, the sovereign equality of all states and the resolution of issues through negotiations. During the second session, we discussed the current situation with food and energy security. Our position on these two matters is well known. We presented it.

As concerns multilateralism, there is nothing to talk about. We have the UN Charter and the Western concepts of a so-called rules-based order set to undermine the Charter. Nobody has seen these rules. They have been shown to nobody. We drew attention to this fact at the meeting and called for returning to the origins of international law. We gave examples of the Western rules having an adverse effect (essentially resulting in reckless schemes) for the international order, which must be based on the UN Charter.

Regarding food and energy security, we illustrated, in detail and in line with the multiple public clarifications made by President of Russia Vladimir Putin, the sources of these crises that began not today, or in February, or even last year. They are the result of the reckless, ill-considered and failing policy of the West, including with respect to the forced green energy transformation, artificial interference in demand and consumption regulation, and interference by the very same market powers that the West has praised for many years. We confirmed Russia's readiness to perform all its obligations concerning supplies of cheap and affordable energy sources – hydrocarbons, oil and gas – although this is exactly what the United States is adamantly speaking against, forcing Europe and the rest of the world to reject these inexpensive sources of energy and shift to much pricier options.

In the food industry, there are no obstacles on Russia's side to resolving this matter using our substantial grain stocks. And yet, the West has created serious difficulties with its unilateral restrictions for insuring our ships, calling at ports and paying for food supplies. We drew attention to the developments in the Black Sea. If the

West is so eager to export Ukrainian grain, all they need to do is to make Kiev de-mine the Black Sea ports and allow ships to pass through Ukraine's territorial waters. At sea, Russia, with Turkey's support, is ready to secure safe passage for such convoys up to the Bosphorus Strait and further to the Mediterranean Sea and consumer markets. The problem is that our Western colleagues clearly intend to establish an international monitoring mechanism for this process that would involve NATO's naval forces. London recently made claims to this effect. We fully understand the meaning of this intention.

On the whole, the West regards the crisis linked with Ukrainian grain as front page news during discussions on the international scene and claims that this grain is allegedly needed to solve the food problem. Statistics note unequivocally that grain "locked up" at Ukrainian ports accounts for less than one percent of global grain output. Consequently, this factor does not exert any real influence on food security. All the West should do is stop artificially blocking Russian grain shipments to countries that have purchased such grain.

Western colleagues did not follow the G20 mandate during the discussion. The G20 mandate calls for regulating global economic matters and reaching agreements on passing intra-UN decisions linked with sustainable development. As soon as they took the floor, they resorted to frenzied criticism of the Russian Federation in connection with the situation in Ukraine and called us "aggressors, invaders and occupiers." We heard a lot today. They urged us to "stop" the special military operation and to attain a peace settlement.

I would like to remind our Western colleagues what they said in previous months, and I would like to ask them to clarify their wishes. If they are talking about launching peace talks, it was Ukraine that stopped mutual dialogue. Speaking at the beginning of the meeting via videoconference, famous economist and political analyst Jeffrey Sachs openly regretted the fact that Ukraine that had initially offered to negotiate later renounced these talks. This is an objective assessment. The West should keep this in mind if it aspires to talks.

It would be pointless to discuss anything with the West if it wants Ukraine to triumph over Russia on the battlefield (they are voicing different statements, including those in favour of talks or a military victory). These Western approaches do not allow Ukraine to launch a peace process. The West forces Kiev to accept Western weapons, to use them for bombarding cities and killing the civilian population. We are witnessing the latter aspect every day, and we cannot put up with this. This dual Western behavior shows that ideology, rather than caring about Ukraine and its citizens and overall European security, comes first.

Despite all my statements regarding the behavior of Western colleagues who, by the way, did not receive any support from the G20 members among developing countries in the heat of the moment, this discussion proved useful. The discussion made it possible to ask some extremely impartial questions to Western representatives who are so far in no position to answer them. We can only see their frenzied Russophobia that substitutes the need to reach agreement on key global economic and financial matters. Actually, the G20 was established for addressing these matters.

Question: It is obvious that the boycott of Russia, which Western diplomats called for, has failed. Is boycott an effective method in the modern world? What did the G7, primarily the US Department of State, hope for when it called for such measures? Cannot the West see that the world has changed and has become multipolar long ago?

An assassination attempt has been made on former Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe. What stands behind it? What was his role in Russia-Japan dialogue? What was his contribution to global politics?

Sergey Lavrov: I don't know what stands behind that assassination. I learned about it during the G20 meeting, and I was the first to begin my address by expressing condolences to my Japanese colleague over it. There will probably be an investigation. I have nothing more to say so far.

As for meetings with me and statements about unwillingness to be photographed with me, I don't invite anyone to be photographed with me. I didn't invite anyone anywhere. Indonesia invited me to attend the G20 meeting, just as it has invited President Vladimir Putin to attend the G20 summit in November. As for the presence or absence of meeting participants, I can tell that everyone was present when the foreign ministers meeting began. I didn't consider it appropriate to make any gestures or insulting statements. Nobody was boycotted. I listened [to all speakers]. It was interesting for me to understand the Western reasoning, even though this could be done based on the previous statements of my Western colleagues. They obviously did not use the G20 meeting for the purpose for which this platform was initially established.

On July 7, Indonesia organised a reception and a concert. The Western colleagues did not attend it. It was their decision and their understanding of the protocol and rules of politeness and ethics. Overall, everything is proceeding as we expected, but I am sure that they have heard us.

Question: Could you comment on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's resignation? He has said many times before that he would only leave office if he saw that the government was not up to its job. He also said that one possible reason for his resignation could be the cabinet's unwillingness to help the Ukrainian people.

Sergey Lavrov: I don't want to comment on this, because Boris Johnson has shown during his terms as prime minister and foreign secretary that what he wants is above all theatrics and that he clings to power to improve his political career. Over the past few years, the UK was conducting a largely aggressive policy toward Russia, using the developments in Ukraine as a pretext and protecting the openly jaundiced and largely neo-Nazi regime, which the Western curators have created in Kiev. Britain's activity has grown many times over after Boris Johnson pulled the country out of the EU, which pushed it to the European political backyard. Over the past few months, the UK was frantically trying to create a new alliance with Poland, the Baltics and Ukraine as a British

bridgehead on the continent for conducting a policy that would not always take the EU's interests into account.

Well, he has stepped down. Everyone called for isolating Russia, but his own party has isolated Johnson.

Question: When will the talks between Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the UN on the shipping of grain from the Black Sea ports be held in Istanbul? At what level will they take place, the foreign ministries or the defence ministries?

Sergey Lavrov: We are ready for talks with our Ukrainian and Turkish colleagues. We have prepared all the decisions that I have just talked about. Kiev must unblock and de-mine their ports or provide safe passage through the mine fields. Outside of Ukrainian waters, Russia and Turkey are ready to ensure the safety of the shipping vessels and escort them to the straits. Then they will move on to the Mediterranean Sea by themselves.

The military play the main role in it. All what I said would be done with the use of naval forces.

I cannot say when the talks will continue, but I confirm that we are always ready to hold them. For the past two months we have been announcing safe corridors from Ukraine's waters to the Bosphorus Strait.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is trying to play a role here. He visited Moscow and sent his representatives. A special working group led by Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Andrey Belousov was created. We have provided them with a memorandum that outlines the possible mechanism. When they are ready to respond, we will listen to what they say.

Question: How do you see the position and foreign policy of the Indonesian Government in this polarised world?

Sergey Lavrov: I see the position of the Indonesian Government and the Indonesian President as the position of a responsible country which understands the importance of building a dialogue

guided by the international law, which, I want to emphasise once again, is based on the principle of a sovereign equality of states. And I believe this is the very right position of Indonesia as a country and a member of the United Nations, the chair of G20 and the future chair of ASEAN.

Question: Is there any chance for the US and Russia to sit together again through G20 and if not, in what way?

Sergey Lavrov: You know, it was not us who abandoned all contacts. It was the United States. That's all I can say. We are not running after anybody suggesting meetings. If they don't want to talk, it's their choice.

Question: The former Japanese Prime Minister has been shot. Do you have any comments on it?

Sergey Lavrov: I just made a comment that I was the only one at the meeting who expressed condolences to the Japanese side through their Foreign Minister.

Question: The Australian Foreign Minister has described Russia's war in Ukraine as illegal, unprovoked and immoral. What do you say to a criticism like that from Australia?

Sergey Lavrov: If Australia is so much concerned about what is going on thousands and thousands of kilometres from it, before providing any comments, I would suggest that Australia take a look at the volumes of documents that describe the reasons for the situation in Ukraine as it evolves now. I am sure that Australia, before commenting on anything, as a responsible country, normally looks into the facts. And I have not the slightest doubt that the Australian Embassy in Moscow faithfully reports what they learn about the origins of this conflict which has been evolving for many years. If those reports are ignored in Canberra, that's not my problem.

Thank you very much.